

Quality and Productivity Commission
28th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Los Angeles County: Ahead of the Curve"

2014 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: 12/13/2012
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2013)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner.

1 Every year, approximately 1,800 youth emancipate from foster care in Los Angeles
 2 County and face the risk of homelessness. Completed in December 2012, and occupied
 3 in 2013, Coteau III is the Community Development Commission's (CDC) first newly
 4 constructed housing project for foster youth. The CDC partnered with United Friends of
 5 the Children's (UFC) to provide housing and teach independent living skills to these
 6 youth in a safe and well-designed living environment. In 2007, CDC began collaborating
 7 with UFC to develop six units of new housing to expand their Pathways to
 8 Independence Transitional Living Program (Pathways), offering a full spectrum of
 9 support for emancipated foster youth between the ages of 18 and 24, with a focus on
 10 those homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The core program components include:
 11 housing, career/vocational counseling and development, educational mentoring and
 12 assistance, health and mental health services, life skills training courses, advocacy
 13 counseling, and alumni services. Pathways is highly successful in moving participants
 14 to self-sufficiency: among the 62% of all former program participants (alumni) with
 15 whom UFC is in contact, 78% are in permanent housing, and 61% are employed.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles 700 W. Main St. Alhambra, CA 91801		TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-262-4511
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Lynn Katano, Assistant Manager Housing Development Unit		TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-586-1806 EMAIL Lynn.Katano@lacdc.org
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 853-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Elisa Vasquez 	DATE 7/10/14	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-586-1762 EMAIL Elisa.Vasquez@lacdc.org
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Sean Rogan 	DATE 7/11/14	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-586-1500

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the Challenge, Solution, and Benefits of the project.

Challenge: According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project from 2012, almost 1/7 of the 400,000 children in foster care in the United States reside in the state of California, and 1/3 of those are in Los Angeles County. Compared with their peers in the general population, foster youth experience poor outcomes in a number of domains. When foster youth leave care, they are on their own with little to no support to help them navigate the difficult path to adulthood. There is no grace period and no safe place to return when things do not go as planned. As a result, foster youth are perhaps one of the most vulnerable populations in our communities. Statistics show that the majority of Los Angeles County foster youth exiting care will not become successfully independent as adults:

- In the first four years after discharge from care, 20% receive cash assistance from CalWORKs and over 30% receive food stamps, indicating periods of extreme poverty. Many youth--estimates are as high as 65%--have no earnings of any amount (Culhane et al., 2011).
- The high school graduation rate for students in foster care in California is lower, at 58%, than other at-risk student subgroups, whose rates range from 60 to 79% (Barrat & Berliner, 2013).
- In Los Angeles, less than half of foster youth enroll in community college, and in one study, only 2% of these received Associate's degrees and 2% met criteria for transfer to a four-year program in the University of California or California State University systems (Culhane et al., 2011).
- Former foster youth have higher levels of criminal justice system involvement than their peers, including a higher rate of imprisonment. 25% of Los Angeles County foster youth experience a Sheriff Department jail stay (Culhane et al, 2011), and in California, where the rate of imprisonment for the general population is 0.13%, it is 4% for foster care alumni.
- About 87% of the foster youth currently participating in the Pathways program were homeless when they entered. The remaining 13% were at imminent risk of losing their housing. Homelessness and housing instability are the most fundamental issues facing emancipating foster youth. Nationally, 41% of those in emergency shelters are former foster youth (Covenant House Institute, 2010).

The perpetuation of these poor outcomes for foster youth results in: (1) many of these individuals using disproportionate amounts of public services, either through welfare assistance or incarceration; (2) the personal potential of thousands of individuals going unrealized; and (3) great stores of energy, experience, and talent that could benefit our communities, going untapped.

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Solution: In 2002, UFC started the Pathways to Independence Transitional Living Program, which provides transition-aged foster youth (18-24 years old) with quality housing and intensive supportive services in a program model that requires increasing levels of personal responsibility and initiative. The far-reaching success of the Pathways Program is only limited by the lack of available resources to accommodate the many County foster youth in need. In the mid-1990's, the Board of Supervisors acknowledged this need in the County and directed the CDC to develop transitional housing targeting emancipated foster youth. Since 2002, the CDC has acquired and rehabilitated five properties for the specific purpose of expanding the Pathways program.

Coteau III, located in South Whittier, is the CDC's first newly constructed housing project for foster youth. The development provides for the basic need of a stable, secure home in a well-designed living environment. Construction of Coteau III, a six-unit apartment building owned by the CDC was completed in December 2012. The development was funded with \$948,155 in Federal HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds, and over \$1.3 million in City of Industry funds, both of which are administered by the CDC and Housing Authority. Capitalizing on the availability of a small vacant site, the six two-bedroom units provide transitional housing for 12 youth. Coteau III achieved LEED for Homes Gold Certification, enabling the residents to live in an energy-efficient and sustainable residential setting.

Clients are referred by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Los Angeles County Probation Department, group homes and other groups, individuals and non-profits. The maximum stay at the facility for program participants is two years. Rental subsidies are provided through DCFS and the Department of Probation's Independent Living Program, administered by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA).

Designed as a key element of the development and with the specific needs of the Pathways Programs in mind, Coteau III's 800 square-foot community room provides a centralized location for both social gatherings and weekly life skills classes. Classes focus on topics designed to prepare youth to transition to independence successfully and build a sense of community amongst Pathways youth and staff. Selected participants commit to attend a six-week orientation session; engage in career, college, or vocational training; and participate in sessions devoted to the development of interpersonal skills and sound mental health. UFC provides independent living training, and help with employment readiness training and socialization skills. Examples of classes include: finance, health, housing, transportation, employment, education, legal and civic issues, and cultural awareness. In addition, UFC has expanded the life skills curriculum to include supplemental topics, including music appreciation, creative writing, public speaking, and dance.

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The holistic and balanced approach to the life skills curriculum has been well received by the youth, allowing them the safe environment in which to express themselves and really engage in each class. This has furthered the sense of community felt by residents, not only amongst themselves and staff, but with the surrounding neighborhoods as well. The availability of community space at Coteau III also offers the unique opportunity for community building among program participants with two other Pathways housing sites also on Coteau Drive.

Benefits:

Pathways graduates can access ongoing services through the alumni program, including mental health counseling, career/educational counseling, and emergency financial assistance when an unexpected hardship occurs that negatively affects their ability to maintain independence. Yet, alumni services extend beyond that - they work to provide youth with the familial bonds and relationships that most experience with family and friends. UFC has created a network of support, helping youth to sustain themselves as independent adults and providing a sense of community and belonging, so that they do not feel they are on their own.

Within the confines of Coteau III's safe and well-designed living environment, the Advocacy Counselors (AC) provide residents with a stable and supportive relationship with a caring adult, creating a platform for the youth to begin to trust and open up. When appropriate, ACs will refer program youth to mental health services performed by professional therapists with whom UFC contracts to visit with the youth at their housing site. As a part of removing barriers to services, therapy is available to all youth enrolled in our Pathways program.

Further, youth meet no less than quarterly with the Career Development and Education Counseling staff to develop and implement a feasible strategy to pursue educational goals and reach for a career, not just a job. Eligible Pathways participants can participate in UFC's College Sponsorship program and over the years, many have gone on from the Pathways program to earn a bachelor's degree. Life skills sessions devoted to education feature qualified volunteers and UFC staff facilitators who share the importance of education to personal development, the impact it can have on financial success, how to identify alternative forms of education beyond high school, and how obtainable a college education is with the wealth of resources available to them.

Pathways is further able to assist graduates with sustaining their independence through their alumni services program, which includes advocacy counseling, career/educational counseling, and emergency financial assistance when an unexpected hardship occurs that negatively affects their ability to maintain independence. Pathways success in moving participants to self-sufficiency is demonstrated by the fact that among the 62% of all former program participants (alumni) with whom UFC is in contact, 78% are in permanent housing, and 61% are employed.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation.

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY

(For single department submissions, do not include this page)

DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 6 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
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